Unintended Consequences from Planned Change: A Challenge for Beginning Principals (Sumario En Espanol)

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Purpose
The purpose of this article is to discuss issues related to unintended consequences of programs within public education along with providing appropriate examples and recommendations for principal preparation.

The Article
This article discusses unintended consequences of public education programs. Unintended consequences may be predictable or non-predictable along with being positive or negative. Often, unintended consequences have negative impacts on attractive program outcomes or produce mutually exclusive alternatives to planned outcomes. While educators are becoming more and more skilled in developing school improvement plans their careful implementation of plans does not always guarantee that the plans will produce an improvement of teaching and learning. The unintended consequences, precipitated by implemented planned changes can directly affect short-term and long-term results. Effective principals are crucial to the process of understanding and addressing unintended consequences.

What this Means for the Field
Reform movements have exemplified several crucial issues facing public education. With this in mind, highly capable principals are essential to effective school reform. Principal preparation programs should address specifically both planned outcomes and unintended consequences, as unintended consequences can interfere with planned organizational change. Principal preparation programs should include the appropriate steps to develop the necessary skills and knowledge to enable principals to anticipate unintended consequences and develop procedures to assess both intended and unintended outcomes.

Citation

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